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## MAKING THE MOTION PICTURES IN FRANCE

Secrets of Obtaining the Strange and Mysterious Effects  
Thrown Upon the Magic Screen Told in an Article  
From the Lectures Pour Tous.

Thousands upon thousands watching the miraculous effects that moving picture machines throw upon the canvas have no doubt been led to wonder by what black art such wonders are produced. It is for the enlightenment of such that the following article has been translated from Lectures Pour Tous, a magazine published in Paris, the city from which most of the films come.

What is the secret of all these marvels? How are the biograph dramas got up? The scenes enacted upon the canvas must, of course first be enacted before the apparatus. If their setting is in the streets of Paris, they are performed entire and au naturel in the open street by actors suitably costumed and made up. To see how let us visit a "cinema-hall." It is seven in the morning; the entire staff is already on hand; not a minute of the day is to be lost. The artists emerge from their dressing rooms costumed and made up. The make-up is as essential for the play on the streets as for a play on the stage, so that the expression of the faces, here of capital importance, shall lose none of its emphasis. We join the actors as they climb into the theater omnibus, and, as we hurry to the appointed place, the best stage manager in Paris—M. Etienne Arnaut—gives the artists a last reading of the scenario. The hero is played by a comedian from the Olympic. In the first act he has received from his wife a tremendous cuff in the face, and now, with a swollen cheek, he is to ramble through Paris. Woe to them that laugh at him! A troupe of clowns in long coats and high hats, a comedienne and an actor dressed up as a venter of newspapers have come along to play the parts of these luckless citizens.

### Beginning of Picture Play

The afflicted husband must dash into a drug store for unguents to soothe the burning cheek. Here is a well lighted one that suits our purpose. We alight, surrounded by fifty people who run after our omnibus, attracted by the strange appearance of our troupe. With the consent of the proprietor one of the clowns goes behind the counter while the biograph apparatus is being set up on the sidewalk. As a whistle from the stage manager the man with the swollen cheek rushes into the shop, and the clowns roar with laughter. Zip! A blow sends him headlong. Exchange of cards. First duel in prospect. En route now for the next scene. At the corner of a street, in full sunshine, a fountain. Perfect! The omnibus stops and the maltreated husband sets about dashing water on his cheek. A second clown goes by arm in arm with the actress. They giggle. A blow hurls the clown into the gutter. The clown has executed his "cascade" with such fury that he has burst his coat. More than 200 people, in windows, take the whole thing seriously, and roar with laughter. By noon we have passed through two arrondissements, raised rumpuses on the terrace of a cafe, in a public garden, in three open squares, and in a dozen streets. An hour later, at Rainey, under the trees of a park, where we get a hilarious welcome, the hero of the burlesque epic, refusing weapons for his duel, knocks down the entire troupe of clowns—adversaries and seconds indiscriminately—and leaves them in a heap, brandishing their arms and legs in the maddest confusion.

The play is completed. To record it, 600 feet of transparent ribbon have been taken. On each yard of that ribbon more than 50 photographs have been taken. While Le Duel à la Gifle is presented upon the biograph screen 10,400 pictures will be shown within the space of a few moments.

### Real Danger

Real danger sometimes attends this outdoor acting. Near London, several months ago, a manager of biograph plays got up a drama involving an attempt to derail the London and Brighton express. The villains, according to scenario, were discovered by an actor dressed as an employee of the railroad, and tied him down between the rails. Naturally, while the series of photographs were being taken, the train was to stop for a moment so that the actor could have his place taken by a dummy before it reached him. Unhappily the driver was unable to stop his engine, and the actor himself, the owner of the biograph, was run over.

When these real dramas are performed upon the scene, the figures move sometimes with an astounding rapidity. In the funny little play, L'Echelle, the robust man ran 100

yards down the street while the apparatus was working. If he kept the crank running at the usual rate, the operator would get about 900 pictures. To produce an impression of greater speed, what does he do? He cuts down the number of pictures to 600, which still reproduces the distance as before, but will be run off upon the screen in a much shorter time. So the actor no longer runs; he bounds ahead with outrageous leaps, since a part of his successive postures have been omitted by the biograph.

There's a better one still. By some amazing enchantment the biograph can make horses gallop backward and make hats jump up from the ground and replace themselves on their owners' heads. The film has simply been reversed.

To produce certain lengthy comic scenes, with wondrous fairies performing in them, the biograph man must have the interior of a theater at his disposal. With the exception of the opera and the Chatelet, no theater in Paris is as well equipped as a biograph establishment. The Gaumonts have one 140 feet long, with a stage 60 feet deep and 105 feet high. The stage flooring is strong enough to uphold a troupe of elephants, and has two approaches for teams. The problem of lighting, here of prime importance, is solved by a skylight of 1800 square yards. Twelve powerful arc lights afford additional illumination. So powerful are they that they will blister your hands and face. Notices in the wings warn the artists against remaining too long within their glare.

### Upside Down Pictures

Everybody was delighted with the adventures of the gentleman who walked up the side of the wall and ran along the ceiling like a fly. Here is the secret. A stage-set representing a parlor wall was laid upon the floor; farther on a second stage-set showed a dining room wall; a third did for the decorated ceiling. Each had all its appropriate appurtenances. The apparatus was carried to the top of the theater and the lens pointed downward. The actor crawled on all fours from one stage set to the next, while the operator turned the crank. The film showed no evidence of the humbug, and the man was shown really running along the ceiling.

But now we come to the case where inanimate objects become animate. With no workman present a carpenter shop assumes a lively activity—the saw sawing a plank, the plane running to and fro, the lathe turning, the hammer rising and falling. This is how it is done. Instead of turning a crank this time the operator runs his apparatus by an electrical arrangement so precise that it enables him to take one picture at a time. The stage manager moves the tools just so far and no farther, get out of the way, and another picture is taken. So on to the end. When the film goes at normal speed, the halts no longer exist. The illusion is perfect.

Same process for La Statue, which emerges unassisted from a block of clay.

A soft clay model, newly formed, is reduced by a series of beatings, to a shapeless mass. At each step in the proceeding a picture is taken. The film is shown running backward.

All this costs. The smallest troupe of performers costs from 800 to 1000 francs; the least grasping fairy company demands from 2000 to 3000 francs. Meanwhile the film costs 20 cents a yard; and as, for safety's sake, the operator makes a duplicate every time, the mere bills for celluloid ribbon run anywhere from 400 to 800 francs for each experiment. L'Enfant Prodigue took 1200 meters of film and those 1200 meters cost \$800. The Passion Play holds the record for expense. Its splendid staging was copied from Tintoret's paintings. It had 200 performances. The open-air scenes were enacted in the forest of Fontainebleau. All told, it cost \$6000.

Every day thousands of miles of films are shipped abroad by the biograph establishments of Paris. France leads the world in this production. And the biograph has a future that has enlisted the interest of our best playwrights. M. Paul Hervieu, Lavendard and Jules Lamaitre have announced intentions to create dramas for the biograph that will be played by artists in the rank of Coquelin and Bernhardt. Edmund Rostand is already at work upon aa Chat Botte.

Bryan is figuring on carrying Iowa and Taft on carrying Georgia.

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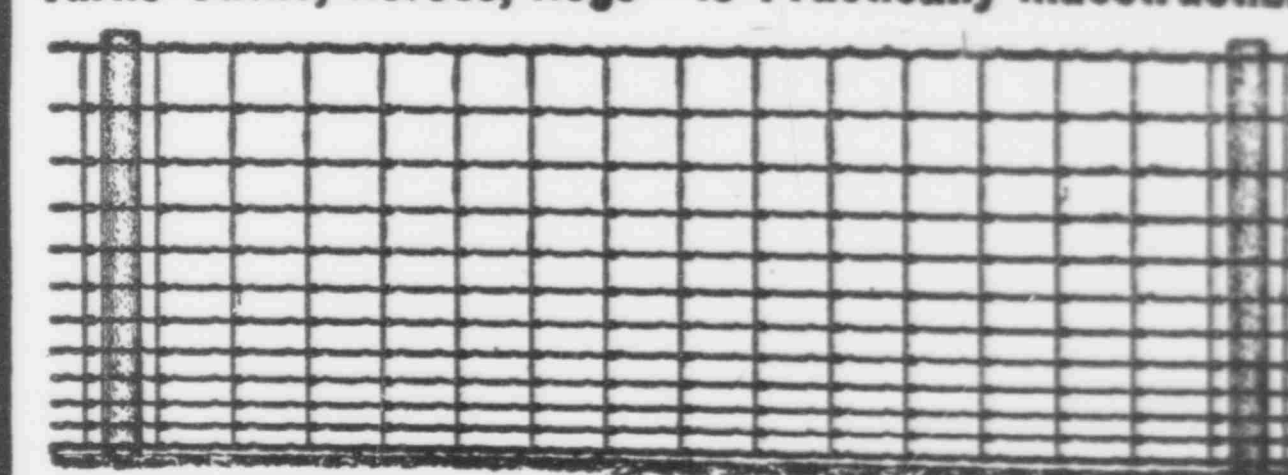
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